

FITNESS

Overcoming Barriers is Key to Effective Exercise

Exercise has been shown to be an important health related behavior, reducing the risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and a number of other chronic diseases. Exercise is important for stress reduction, maintaining a healthy body weight and reducing health risks of developing a chronic disease. Even though the benefits of exercise are known, population trends show that a large percentage of adults and children are not physically active at a level that will allow for these benefits. Listed below are common types of barriers people face with attempting to become physically active.

1. Find Time for Exercise

One of the most commonly reported barriers to being physically active is the “lack of time.” It is important to remember that exercising in periods of 10 minutes or more can have significant health and fitness benefits. For example, if an individual does not have time to go for a 30-minute brisk walk, taking three 10-minute walks throughout the day can be an alternative.

2. Making Exercise Convenient

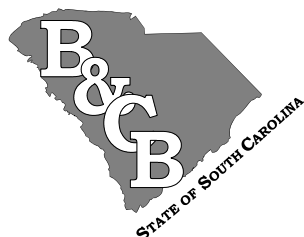
Making activity more convenient is also an effective method of increasing activity participation. Requiring individuals to go to a gym may create a barrier unless the facility is close to where the person works or lives. It is important to choose activities that can be worked into the day. This is one of the most effective strategies for increasing activity behavior.

3. Alternative Activities

While many individuals do not enjoy formal exercise, there are other forms of activity that can be just as beneficial. Alternative activities are typically those that can be incorporated into one’s lifestyle, like using a push mower rather than a riding mower to cut the lawn or walking to destinations instead of driving.

Prevention Partners encourages everyone to strive to include at least 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity a day on most days of the week. For individuals who are relatively sedentary, beginning an exercise routine may be difficult but doable. Consult your physician before beginning an exercise program if you have been sedentary or have health complications.

Source: American College of Sports Medicine



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